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Istook Statement to Senate: "No Amnesty on Immigration Bill"

Washington, DC – Congressman Ernest Istook (R-Warr Acres) joined more than 20 House members to reiterate their strong opposition to any amnesty program for illegal immigrants that would be included in immigration reform legislation being considered by the Senate today.

"Like most Americans, I welcome immigrants, but it has to be done legally," said Istook. "For too many years we have turned a blind eye to the problem of illegal immigration as millions of people streamed across our borders. No longer. To give blanket amnesty to everyone who is here illegally cheats the people who took the time to become an American the right, legal way. Amnesty didn't work in the past, doesn't work in the present and won't work in the future.""

"People in Washington are not the only one's out of touch with this issue. America is filled with state and local leaders that want to put their heads in the sand and pretend that this is a federal problem and they have no role in it. It's not."

"Just like the War on Drugs is not exclusively a federal problem, the War on Illegal Immigration is not just a federal problem either. It is a combined problem that requires resources and commitment at the state and local level as well as the federal level. I hear so many local people say, "Somebody else has do something about it" and yet they do nothing to assist in the enforcement of the laws in the interior of the country. Most illegal immigrants are no longer on the border. They figure that if they can get past the border they can get into an area where people will be lax and not assists us in enforcing the law."

"Just as we need cooperation between state, local and federal authorities in combating the War on Drugs, we need the same cooperation if we are to combat the scourge of illegal immigration. People shouldn't think that once they get to the heart of the country they are home free. That is the source of the problem."